

# HEALTH

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## Take Care of Your Feet

Do you want to avoid serious foot problems that can lead to a toe, foot, or leg amputation? It's all about taking good care of your feet. Foot care is very important for each person with diabetes, but especially if you have:

- Loss of feeling in your feet.
- Changes in the shape of your feet.
- Foot ulcers or sores that do not heal.

Nerve damage can cause you to lose feeling in your feet. You may not feel a pebble inside your sock that is causing a sore. You may not feel a blister caused by poorly fitting shoes. Foot injuries such as these can cause ulcers, which may lead to amputation. Use this health bulletin to make your own plan for taking care of your feet. Helpful tips make it easy! Share your plan with your doctor and health care team and get their help when you need it.

There is a lot you can do to prevent serious problems with your feet. Here's how:

1. **Properly manage your diabetes:** Make healthy lifestyle choices to help keep your blood glucose (sugar), blood pressure, and cholesterol close to normal. Doing so may help prevent or delay diabetes-related foot problems as well as eye and kidney disease. Work with your health care team to make a diabetes plan that fits your lifestyle. The team may include your doctor, a diabetes educator, a nurse, a dietitian, a foot care doctor called a podiatrist and other specialists.
2. **Check your feet everyday:** You may have serious foot problems, but feel no pain. Check your feet for cuts, sores, red spots, swelling, and infected toenails. Find a time (evening is best) to check your feet each day. Make checking your feet part of your every day routine. If you have trouble bending over to see your feet, use a plastic mirror to help. You also can ask a family member or caregiver to help you.
3. **Wash your feet everyday:** Wash your feet in warm, not hot, water. Do not soak your feet, because your skin will get dry. Before bathing or showering, test the water to make sure it is not too hot. You can use a thermometer (90° to 95° F is safe) or your elbow. Dry your feet well. Be sure to dry between your toes. Use talcum powder or cornstarch to keep the skin between your toes dry.
4. **Be sure to ask your doctor to:** (1) Check the sense of feeling and pulses in your feet at least once a year. (2) Tell you if you are likely to have serious foot problems and how to care for your feet between doctor visits. (3) Refer you to a foot care doctor if needed. (4) Decide if special shoes would help your feet stay healthy.

